

**SPD Employee Continuing Education
Training Guide**



1011. Team Building and Human Relations

Prepared by the SPD Advisory Group
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Objectives:

- 1) Define Human Relations, Communication, and Teamwork.
- 2) State four motivators of employees.
- 3) Identify five common “myths” of communication, along with the reasons why they are incorrect.
- 4) State six communications “road blocks” that hinder effective communication.
- 5) State eight principles of effective oral communications.
- 6) State four ways to help build a team attitude.
- 7) Identify four styles of management and define the most effective style.
- 8) Explain why moral, legal, and ethical behavior is absolutely essential in a professional code of conduct.

**SUPPLY, PROCESSING & DISTRIBUTION (SPD)
CONTINUING EDUCATION
TEAM BUILDING AND HUMAN RELATIONS**

Introduction

The Merriam-Webster Dictionary gives us the following definitions:

Human Relations: a study program designed to develop better interpersonal and inter group adjustments.

Communication: a process by which information is exchanged in a variety of ways such as electronically, verbally, or with body language.

Teamwork: work done by several associates with each doing a part but all subordinating personal prominence to the efficiency of the whole.

Human Relations

The “Motivation Hygiene Theory,” by Fredrick Herzberg, states that there are certain motivators that meet most individuals' needs. These motivators are recognition, work, responsibility and advancement. There are additional human relation concerns that SPD employees should have in addition to the motivators. These include:

- 1) Understanding each of their peers (fellow employees) as individuals, and when possible, to incorporate this knowledge into the way they interact with their fellow workers.
- 2) Helping other employees to achieve the highest possible level of job satisfaction.
- 3) Increasing their contribution to the SPD profession and to the employing facility.
- 4) Developing a genuine spirit of cooperation and teamwork between themselves, their peers, and those at higher organizational levels.

Some techniques of human relations are really common sense and are already used by professional SPD employees. Other concepts involve the application of principles that are relatively easy to recall while others will possibly require new philosophies about working and interacting with peers. These are more difficult to use. In reviewing the broad topic of human relations, we can focus on the **five important concepts: communication skills, teamwork, professionalism, ethics, and patient relations.**

Communication, like all skills, requires practice. Good communication is vital to the success of every employee. Employees must communicate policies, ideas, and suggestions to their peers, as well as to their supervisor. The supervisor, in turn, communicates information up and down the chain of command. Each person's role in this communication link is vital to its success.

Miscommunication is a common misunderstanding about the process that can cause breakdowns in effectiveness. Listed below are the five common communication myths:

- 1) **We only communicate when we want to.** People do not really control every aspect of communication. For example, if a SPD manager ignores a situation or does not respond to it, this can convey a message just as clearly as words that express low priority or disinterest.
- 2) **Words mean the same thing to everybody.** Words have a special meaning based upon a person's experience with them. What does the following mean: "Sally, please report to work early tomorrow"? Does it mean in time for the "early" shift? Before that time? Earlier than she usually reports for work? Something else?
- 3) **Words are the primary way we communicate.** We often communicate nonverbally. Remember the saying, "Actions speak louder than words." The way we look, how we act, and what we do when we speak or listen is often very effective at communicating what or how we feel about the topic under consideration.
- 4) **The process of communication is one-way: The sender "tells" the receiver.** Communication is most effective when it is a two-way activity. Effective communicators talk "with" rather than "at" or "to" others. Feedback is important because it relates to the listener's reactions to the sender's verbal and/or nonverbal messages. If feedback can be interpreted correctly, the sender will know whether and to what extent the receiver has understood the message. Feedback assures that the message being communicated is the one that is received.
- 5) **A message should contain all essential information.** While too little information is certainly not good, too much information can also be a problem. The term **information overload** is often used when too much information is given. The concern should be with the **quality** of information rather than the **quantity** of information that is communicated.

Communication should be a simple, clear process. Sometimes the process is often made much more difficult than it is. We set up roadblocks that interfere with the true message and cause misunderstandings. There are six common roadblocks to effective communication that SPD employees should consider as they communicate:

- 1) **Unfair comparison.** Do not compare one employee to another. Each person has unique talents and abilities.
- 2) **Just like me.** We tend to like individuals who behave or think as we do. We often pay less attention to those who are different. Learn to communicate in ways all people can understand.
- 3) **Stereotypes.** These generally occur when we form opinions about certain groups and then apply these opinions to every person in that group. Not everyone belongs in the same group. Each is a separate individual.
- 4) **Good day/bad day effect.** Everyone has good and bad days. There are some times when we allow personal feelings to affect our communication. On the bad days, we may be more critical of other employees. Always try to communicate and interact with others consistently, both on good and bad days.

- 5) **Halo effect.** This is practiced when we favor a person because he/she has quality we find to be attractive or valuable. In the process, negative behavior may be overlooked. Favoritism can hurt communication.
- 6) **Pitchfork effect.** This is the opposite of the halo effect. This occurs when we dislike someone because of a quality or personal characteristic that we do not like. We cannot let the pitchfork effect become a barrier to communication.

Basic Speaking Principles

- 1) Good speakers know what they are going to say and will develop an outline and use their outline as they speak.
- 2) Identify the main points in a message. Organize what will be said and assure that each main point is addressed.
- 3) Stay focused. Do not ramble, digress, or talk about things that are not important to your message.
- 4) Concentrate on the listener-not yourself.
- 5) Speak enthusiastically. Be committed to the purpose of the message and show interest.
- 6) Be able to back up all information given.
- 7) Think about the listener's background and speak in a manner that will help assure that the message is accurately received.
- 8) When speaking, use language that the listener will understand.

Teamwork

A participative management style encourages teamwork. This style of management satisfies the whole range of human needs. Groups make major decisions themselves and these results in achieving high targets and excellent productivity. There is complete trust within the group and the sense of participation leads to a high degree of motivation. Employees cannot do their work without the help of others. This is why **teamwork** is so important. What one does, or does not do, clearly affects the work of others and the success or failure of SPD. Teamwork is beneficial to the facility in other ways, as well. For example, it can:

- 1) Improve productivity through increased staff cooperation and reduced interpersonal competition.
- 2) Increase employees' job satisfaction.
- 3) Improve the work environment by creating a common purpose for the staff.
- 4) Increase patient satisfaction levels through increased awareness of employee's roles.
- 5) Increase administrator's abilities to achieve results.
- 6) Decrease job-related stress.

There are several important factors that are necessary for good teamwork. They are:

- 1) **A good attitude.** A proper attitude is the most important factor necessary for teamwork. Attitudes toward the job, fellow employees, and patients affect our actions. Often co-workers affect the attitude of the employees.
- 2) **Cooperation.** To give good service, be willing to help and work with other employees.
- 3) **Promptness.** When an employee is late to work or does not show up, this affects other employees. The remaining members of the team have to work harder, or goals related to quantity and quality standards of work will suffer.
- 4) **Loyalty.** A good member of a team trusts co-workers and supervisors. At the same time, co-workers and supervisors trust each team member.

Effective strategies that SPD employees can use to improve teamwork include:

- 1) **Find out what motivates employees.** Look at the work group-both individually and as a team. What motivates them? Employees should also be rewarded as a team when appropriate.
- 2) **Evaluate current work methods.** Review the departmental policies and procedures to assure understanding about what is to be done, by whom, and why. Ask for advice from the team members as to the best ways to perform tasks, improve performance, and increase user satisfaction.
- 3) **Use strategies that can improve work methods and increase staff productivity.** This may include cross training, on the job training, and employee empowerment as it relates to training employees. What they need to focus on is departmental goals and the authority needed to meet those goals. There are also employee suggestion and award programs, which can be helpful.

Some teambuilding exercises and strategies that may be used are such things as:

- 1) **Use a Koosh Ball to get participation.** The person with the Koosh has the floor. When they are finished speaking, they toss the Koosh to someone else; this prevents interruptions from others.
- 2) **Have individuals write down their feelings about the team on 3x5 cards.** Collect all cards and redistribute them. Have team members read and explain the cards based on what they think the writer meant. This allows issues and concerns to be brought forward without fear of punishment.
- 3) **Set goals as a group and develop an action plan for how to reach the group's goal.**

Professional Behaviors

What is **professionalism**? Professionals are proud of themselves, know how to do the job correctly, always try to do better and make the profession better in the process. A professional “goes the extra mile,” is part of the team, tries to put forth the best possible

effort to meet the facility's and department's goals, and is interested in other employees and patients as well. SPD employees have numerous responsibilities that are an important part of their job. They know what their supervisors expect of them and are consistently able to meet these standards. They have an effective way to communicate with their supervisor, and they do this as often as necessary. Professional employees are courteous and are concerned about the problems that other staff members have on the job. How employees get along with their supervisor will affect job success. There should be a mutual respect and understanding between both parties. SPD employees should recognize that the boss might not be their friend or "buddy". However, a professional relationship that considers both the job to be done and the human aspects about the best way to work is very important. Employees who obtain promotions, pay raises, and move more quickly up their career ladders usually have the respect of their peers and supervisor. This respect will likely be there if one:

- 1) Cooperates---works hard and follows orders.
- 2) Is dependable---does what he or she says will be done.
- 3) Has good manners---is respectful of others-patients, co-workers, and supervisor(s).
- 4) Works well with others.
- 5) Shows an interest in the job and in what is being done.
- 6) Has ambition---is willing to work hard to be successful.
- 7) Is loyal---supports the facility, supervisor, co-workers, and employees.
- 8) Is creative---generates ideas, does extra work when possible, and sets a good example for others.

By doing these things, employees show respect to their peers and supervisor and in turn, will likely gain the respect of others.

All employees have the right to expect certain things from their work. Employee's rights generally include the following:

- 1) Fair pay for the work completed
- 2) Safe working conditions
- 3) Training that is needed to perform the current job up to standards and additional training after that point to maintain performance and possibly advance
- 4) Help to make sure that all co-workers work well together
- 5) An explanation of all applicable policies, rules, and regulations that affect the employee
- 6) A fair evaluation of work completed.

If an employee feels that all these considerations are not being provided, he/she should discuss the situation with their supervisor.

Moral behavior relates to the basic principles of what is right and wrong. Patients who enter the hospital fully entrust their life and care to the staff. SPD employees must honor this trust as a member of the healthcare team. Accept responsibility to follow work

schedules, to maintain good attendance, and to always abide by established policies and principles in the best interest of patient care. One also has the responsibility to respect the beliefs and rights of co-workers. Team members must foster a team spirit and not engage in gossip or conduct, which affects the best interests of the department. Above all, have a responsibility to preserve personal values and beliefs. Never engage in activities which violate personal moral or religious beliefs; such problems must be brought to the attention of a supervisor for mutual resolution.

Authority of law determines **legal behavior**, and one must never overstep the limitations of these responsibilities. Legal limitations are established to protect staff as well as patients. SPD technicians will always be held legally responsible for their actions. They are expected to perform job duties as they have been taught. Never accept responsibility or attempt to carry out a job task for which proper instructions or training has not been received. Always pay attention to detail and precisely follow each step of a written procedure. Keep thorough records and documentation. Short cuts and carelessness may cause patient infection, undue suffering, harm, and even loss of life.

Ethical behavior relates to what is “right” and what is “wrong” relative to the standards of conduct for one’s profession, which is frequently a matter of concern today. Ethical conduct is required of SPD managers at all times. However, the difference between what is “right” and what is “wrong” can be viewed from different perspectives. If there is a situation that presents itself, how does one decide if a proposed action is ethical?

Answers to the following questions may help to answer this question:

- 1) Is the proposed action legal?
- 2) Does the proposed action hurt anyone?
- 3) Is the proposed action fair?
- 4) Am I being honest as I undertake the proposed action?
- 5) Can I live with myself if I do what I am considering?
- 6) Would I like to publicize my decision?
- 7) What if everyone did it?

A code of ethics can be helpful because it provides awareness about the need for a plan to deal with potential problem situations. There are seven action steps which can be used to establish and re-emphasize proper ethical conduct in almost any organization including healthcare facilities:

- 1) Have a mission; fully understand what your organization stands for and be aware of the importance of the facility’s professional and community image.
- 2) Involve everyone who will be affected in the development and installation of the Code of Ethics.
- 3) Recognize the need for organization-wide training and communication as the program is implemented. Also recognize the critical importance of commitment to the Code from all organizational levels.

- 4) Look for “ground rules” that can define behavior. Be aware of those issues most likely to cause “problems”; be sure that they are addressed in the Code.
- 5) Be ready, willing and able to fairly and consistently enforce all element of the Code.
- 6) Fully integrate ethical factors into the decision-making process. The importance of ethics will last “forever”; it is not a “program” that begins at a specified date and then ends some time later.
- 7) Hold all staff members accountable for the actions required by the Code of Ethics.

A code of ethics identifies how healthcare facility employees should interact with and relate to each other and all constituencies whom they serve.

SPD personnel have an ethical responsibility to keep up with modern technology and techniques relating to the principles and methods of reprocessing and sterilization.

Recommended standards of practice are set forth by professional agencies as follows:

The Association for Advancement of Medical Instrumentation (AAMI), American Society for Healthcare Central Service Personnel (ASHCSP), The Centers for Disease Control (CDC), and the International Association of Healthcare Central Service Material Management (IAHCSMM). Knowledge of and understanding about the guidelines set forth by these groups combined with one's expertise will allow practical judgments based on sound data. Departmental policies that fulfill moral, legal, and ethical responsibilities to the patient can then be developed.

"Coming together is a beginning, keeping together is progress, and working together is success." Henry Ford

Post Test

- 1) _____ is defined as effective interpersonal relationships that must be developed and maintained on both individual and group basis.
- 2) _____ is a common misunderstanding about the process that can cause breakdown in effectiveness.
- 3) What are the 5 important concepts of human relations?
- 4) What four things are necessary for teamwork?
- 5) How can you improve teamwork?
- 6) What is professionalism?
- 7) _____ relates to the basic principles of what is “right” or “wrong.”
- 8) Ethical behavior relates to right and wrong relative to the _____ of one’s profession.
- 9) Unfair comparison, just like me, stereotypes, good day/bad day effort, halo effect and pitchfork effects are all _____ of communication.
- 10) CDC stands for _____?

Answer Key

- 1) Human Relations.
- 2) Miscommunication.
- 3) Communication Skills, Teamwork, Professionalism, Ethics and Patient Relations.
- 4) Good Attitude, Cooperation, Promptness and Loyalty.
- 5) Find out what motivates people. Evaluate current work methods. Use strategies that can improve work methods. Increase staff productivity.
- 6) They are proud of themselves, know how to do their jobs correctly and to try to do better and make the profession better in the process.
- 7) Moral Behavior.
- 8) Standard of Conduct.
- 9) Roadblocks.
- 10) Centers for Disease Control.

References:

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